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GARDINER MANOR

THE GARDINER MANOR

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE THIRD ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE NEW YORK BRANCH

OF

THE ORDER OF COLONIAL LORDS OF
MANORS IN AMERICA. *New York Branch*

HELD IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
APRIL 24, 1915

BY

SARAH GARDINER TYLER

BALTIMORE
1916

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Monograph



GARDINER MANOR HOUSE, BUILT BY DAVID GARDINER, 6TH LORD OF THE MANOR, IN 1774

Ladies and Gentlemen:

When our President, Mr. Livingston, wrote that he would like to have me tell you something about the Manor of Gardiner's Island, I felt that I had a difficult task; but when he said the time limit would be fifteen minutes, I felt that to put the two hundred and seventy-nine years of its history into that short time would be impossible. However, I will do my best.

I have referred for dates, etc., to articles written by Mrs. Martha J. Lamb, Mr. George Parsons Lathrop, and others.

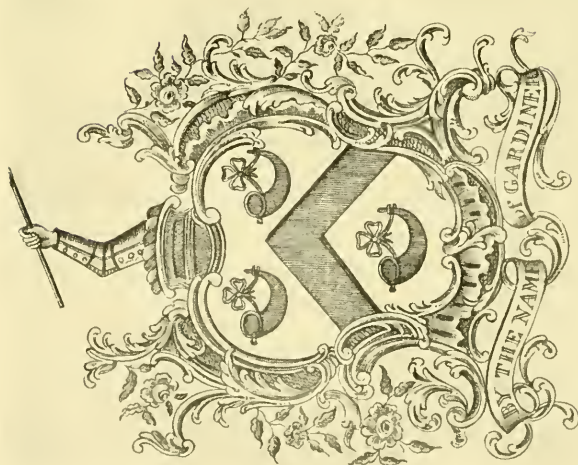
The first English settlement in the present limits of the State of New York was made by Lion Gardiner, by the purchase from the Indians, of an island now known as Gardiner's Island. It was nine miles long by one to one and a half wide, and contained 3500 acres. This purchase was duly confirmed by the agent of Lord Sterling, March 10, 1639. Gardiner's Island was not only a manor, but was, also, a lordship, for the terms of Governor Dongan's Grant, in 1686, were "To erect and constitute the said island one lordship and manor, to all intents and purposes. The said island shall henceforth be called the 'Lordship and Manor of Gardiner's Island.'" This island has been longer in the possession of one family than any other individual estate on this continent, having had twelve proprietors in direct line, to the present owner.

Lion Gardiner was the first professional engineer who ever stood on the soil of New England. He was born in 1599, 316 years ago. Many of the family of Gardiner and Lion are buried in the cathedral at Norfolk, England.

The same coats of arms used by the Gardiners of Gardiner's Island are on the pavements, and tombs in this cathedral. His family has been traced by Sir Christopher Banks to the Gardiner who married one of the co-heiresses of the Barony of Fitz Walter.

The arms are identical with those formerly borne by Thomas Gardiner prior, of the monastery, of Tynemouth, England, in the year 1200.

Lion Gardiner was Lieutenant in a regiment, of which Lord Vere was Commander, and with him, went to Holland. While Lion Gardiner was serving under the Dutch flag, he was in



COAT OF ARMS OF THE GARDINER FAMILY



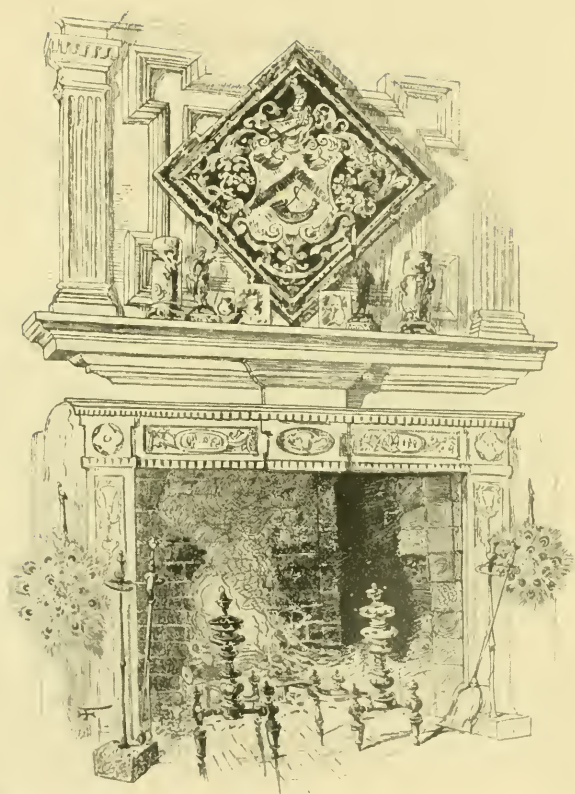
COAT OF ARMS

COAT OF ARMS OF THE GARDINER FAMILY, AS CHANGED
 DURING THE LIFE OF JOHN, 5TH LORD OF THE MANOR,
 FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON. BOTH ARMS
 ARE ON THE GARDINER TOMBS IN THE
 CATHEDRAL AT NORFOLK, ENGLAND

constant and familiar intercourse with Hugh Peters the eminent Divine, Reverend John Davenport, and other Protestants, who had found an asylum in Rotterdam. They urged Gardiner to accept a position offered him by a number of notables, in making a settlement at the mouth of the Connecticut River. The leaders of the enterprise included Oliver Cromwell, John Hamden, Sir Matthew Boynton, Sir Richard Saltonstall, Sir Arthur Heslerigge, Lord Say and Sele, Lord Brook, afterward the Earl of Warwick, and Colonel George Fenwick. They not only made choice of a Governor, but had employed Lion Gardiner, as a competent Engineer, to precede them to America "for drawing, ordering, and making of a city, towns, and forts of defence." "The site of a city, and castles, and palaces, to be rendered suitable for the reception of men of quality," had already been selected, at the mouth of the Connecticut River. Lion Gardiner was to be engineer, architect, and builder, and was to have three hundred able bodied men under his control. Two hundred as a garrison, fifty to till the ground, and fifty to build houses. He was employed to command the post four years, supplies to be forwarded from England, as the work advanced, an important trust in connection, of beginning an empire, in a new world. The inference is that Gardiner was known to possess the requisite qualifications. His education was exceptional for the period, and his taste for mathematics had resulted in the study of civil, and military engineering; he had been in the English Army, as an officer, under Sir Thomas Fairfax, seeing much active service; and his skill as an engineer had attracted the notice of Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange, who made him Master of Works, and Fortifications at his camp in the Netherlands. Thus, it must have been a deserved honor, when an Englishman was placed at the helm of defence in Holland, by a great general, bred to the science of war, and commanding a contest like that against Philip of Spain.

While stationed in the vicinity of the City of Worden, Gardiner made the acquaintance of Mary Williamson Durcant, whom he married at Worden, July 10, 1635. They proceeded at once to London, whence they sailed for Boston, on the norsey bark, "Batchelor," Thomas Webb, Master, a vessel provided by the Company, of only twenty-five tons burden, in which they tossed on the rough waves, from August 1st, until the 28th of November, three months and seventeen days. Mrs. Gardiner was attended by a French maidservant, Elizabeth

Colet, and there was one other passenger. The officers and crew numbered eight. These twelve souls were consigned to a miniature craft, much less in size than the ordinary yacht of the present day, and about as fit to cope with the perils of the sea as a Dutch cradle. No wonder Winthrop wrote in his journal "Her passengers and goods are here safe, through the Lord's great providence." He landed in Boston, one cold, bleak, blustery November morning in 1635; he was thirty-six years of age, of fine military presence, well proportioned, with quiet face, keen eyes, intelligent and deep set, and the manner and bearing of a gentleman. He was expected, and received a warm welcome from Governor Thomas Dudley, and from the ex-Governors, Deputy Governors, and future Governors of much-governed Boston, of whom were present, John Winthrop, John Endicott, Simon Bradstreet, Sir Henry Vane, John Haynes, Roger Ludlow, Richard Bellingham, and the younger John Winthrop, an exceptional group of lights for one small town just five years old. His presence in Boston aroused the people to secure his experienced services, against savage foes. Up to that hour, Boston was without any fort. It was agreed that all of Boston should donate their services; and Gardiner built a fort, on Fort Hill, which was used until after the Revolutionary War. Meanwhile, the younger Winthrop had sent a force of twenty men, under Lieutenant Gibbons, afterwards Major General of Massachusetts, to break ground at the mouth of the Connecticut River, and erect suitable buildings for the reception of Gardiner, who repaired there, accompanied by his wife. The Winter that followed was one of the coldest on record, and no work could be done. At last, Spring came, but no soldiers, or laborers, no imposing procession of notables, or nobles. Gardiner said "Our great expectation came only two men, Colonel George Fenwick and a manservant." Four years at Saybrook Fort, named for Lord Say and Lord Brook, were years of hard work, anxiety, danger and active warfare with the Indians; but he had the satisfaction of aiding in the plans which resulted in the defeat, and almost annihilation of the Pequots. When this engagement expired with the Lords and gentlemen, nothing daunted by his hard experiences, he betook himself to a still more secluded home, purchasing Monchonac from the Indians, or the Isle of Wight, as Gardiner called it. This island was sixteen miles from Saybrook, the nearest white settlement, and here his second child was born, the first English child in the

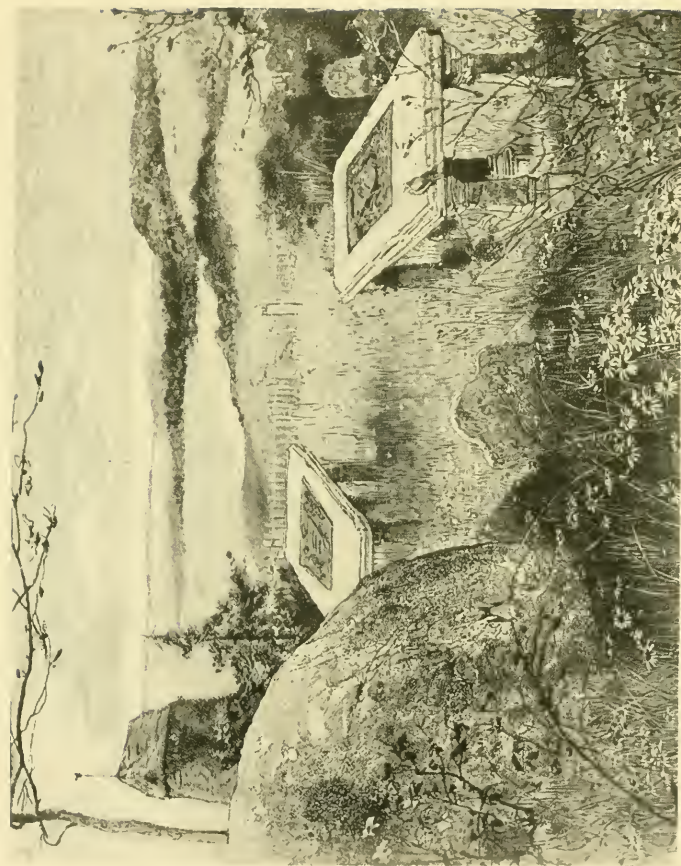


FIREPLACE IN THE MANOR HOUSE WITH THE ESCUTCHEON, WORKED BY
ELIZABETH, DAUGHTER OF JOHN, 3RD LORD OF THE MANOR

State of New York. Lion Gardiner died at East Hampton, L. I., in 1663. His son, David, was sent to England to be educated and there married Mary Lerringham at St. Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey. David was the first white child born in the State of Connecticut. After David, came John, and the island alternated, from David to John for eight generations. Lord John, 3rd, born April 1661 has on his tomb in New London, Conn., "His Excellency, John Gardiner, Lord of the Isle of Wight," surmounted by the arms of the family. It was during his life, 1699, that Captain Kidd landed upon the island, and buried a large chest of treasure. Fearing the act had been discovered, Kidd went to the proprietor, and told him what he had done; he knew his presence was a threat, in this isolated abode, and demanded refreshment for himself, and his vicious looking crew. Among the things provided was a roast pig. Kidd was so pleased with his repast that he took courteous leave of his host, and hostess, and upon so doing, presented Mrs. Gardiner with a cloth of gold of exquisite beauty, which has been carefully preserved, and handed along from generation to generation. Not quite satisfied with having placed himself in the position of a beggar before a gentleman and his family, Kidd is said to have left a costly diamond in the well bucket, where he pretended to drink, just before quitting the island. The diamond was found, whether in the well bucket, or elsewhere, and has ever since been treasured by the members of the Gardiner family.

It is clear from Kidd's behavior, that he counted on absolute immunity under Bellomont's protection, but things had grown too hot for the Governor, and when the pirate chief got to Boston, he was arrested and imprisoned; whence, he was sent to London, tried in 1701 for piracy, and the murder of one of his crew, and executed. Bellomont secured his memoranda of deposits in various places, sent out a demand for their surrender, among others to Gardiner, who made haste to dig up the chests and bales and carry them to Boston. The receipt given him by the Governor's Committee, dated July 7th, 1699, now in possession of the present proprietor, specifies bags of gold dust, gold and silver coin, precious stones, gold and silver bars, etc., their value set at 4500 pounds.

During the early years of the century that followed, the manor was frequently visited by privateers, smugglers and freebooters, and suffered much loss from their depredations. In 1728, it was completely invested by a band of piratical

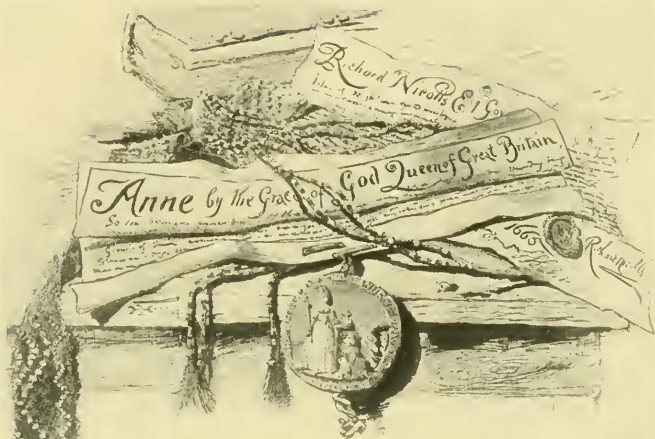


TOMBSTONES ON GARDINER'S ISLAND, ERECTED OVER THE GRAVES OF ITS PROPRIETORS

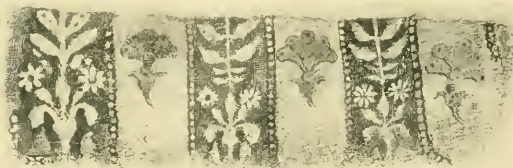


"CAPTAIN KIDD'S HOLLOW," WHERE HE BURIED A LARGE CHEST OF TREASURE

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WAMPUM, PRESENTED TO LION GARDINER, 1ST LORD OF THE
MANOR, BY WYANDACH, SACHEM OF MONTAUK



FRAGMENT OF A PIECE OF CLOTH-OF-GOLD PRESENTED BY
CAPT. KIDD TO THE WIFE OF JOHN GARDINER, 3RD
LORD OF THE MANOR, IN JUNE, 1699

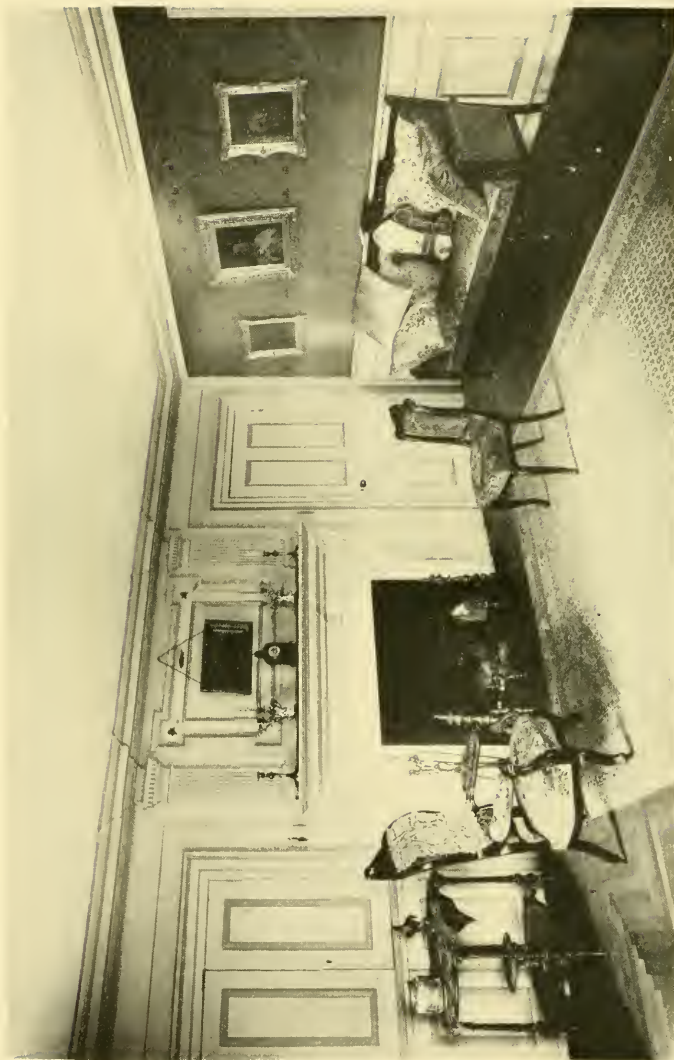
desperadoes, eighty in number, including Spaniards, Frenchmen and mulattoes; they assaulted the manor house in the night, destroyed the furniture, and beds, and plundered household articles, clothing and valuables of every description. They succeeded in carrying off all the family plate, except one silver tankard, which Mrs. Gardiner seized as she fled through the rear passage. Gardiner was severely wounded, and many of his laborers were cut with weapons of the assailants. The pirates escaped with every available article of value the island afforded. The tankard is cherished as a priceless relic of this event. Thus far, the old feudal estate had flourished in its independence of Colonial Government, in no way disturbed by the political agitation of the times, but with the dawn of the Revolution, it bowed to the divinity of a new liberty, and a fresh leaf was turned in history. There were no electric wires to flash impending disaster over land, and no railroads to bring succor from afar. A fleet of thirteen British ships anchored in Gardiner's Bay, a party of British officers landed on the island to secure supplies for the famished troops in Boston. The British helped themselves to 1200 sheep, a cargo of hogs, fowls, cheese and hay worth several thousand dollars, without payment, and departed. Henceforth, Gardiner's Island was a foraging field for the British, and, in a certain sense, desolated. During a summer, and winter, Vice Admiral Arbuthnot, with eleven ships, remained in Gardiner's Bay. The draughts upon the resources of the island were constant. Horses were taken for the use of the officers on shore, and the timber greatly damaged.

Some of the British officers were billeted upon Colonel Abraham Gardiner at East Hampton, much to his discomfort—Sir William Erskin, Lord Percy, afterward Duke of Northumberland, Governor Tryon, Major Andre and Governor Clinton. They made frequent trips to Gardiner's Island, where they found a most enticing hunting ground, and in stormy weather, they took possession of the manor house, and diverted themselves with playing quoits in the dining room; the oaken floors still bear the marks of the game.

While Major Andre was quartered with Colonel Gardiner, his son, Dr. Nathaniel Gardiner, a surgeon in the New Hampshire Continental Infantry, came home on leave of absence. The family carefully suppressed the fact, but after his departure, Andre quietly informed them that he had been aware of his presence in the house, and would have been much pleased



MARY GARDINER JOHNSON, WIFE OF REV. STEPHEN JOHNSON OF LYNNE,
CONNECTICUT, AND DAUGHTER OF JOHN GARDINER, 5TH
LORD OF THE MANOR. BORN, JULY, 1740



DINING ROOM IN THE MANOR HOUSE
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BEDROOM IN THE MANOR HOUSE

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A VIEW ON GARDINER'S ISLAND. SHEEP ON THE COMMON

to have made his acquaintance, only that his duty as a British officer would have compelled him to arrest the young surgeon as a spy. It was a curious coincidence that this same young Dr. Gardiner should have been ordered to attend Andre the last night of his life. When Andre left East Hampton, he exchanged wine glasses with Colonel Gardiner, leaving two from his camp chest, and these mementoes are now guarded with jealous care by his descendants. But with all the sunshine and love-romance of the intervening years, the island was to taste still further fruits of war. In 1812, a formidable British fleet came to anchor in Gardiner's Bay. The fleet numbered seven battle-ships of the line, several frigates and other vessels, all obtaining supplies chiefly from Gardiner's Island. Oxen were taken from the plow and killed. Sir Thomas Harvey was in command, and endeavored to restrain his men from showing disrespect to the proprietor, and his family; but the sailors were perpetually coming on shore, and the subordinate officers were not the best of teachers, by example. Some weeks later, Captain Sir Hugh Pigott came on shore with a number of men, parading before the manor house, made unreasonable demands, and threatened to fire the buildings. Gardiner sent his family, and servants to the cellar for safety, and intended to defend his property at all hazards. The British finally left, and some time later, a letter of apology reached the island from the Commander-in-Chief.

The early history of this island is rich in Indian legends and old time tales of love and sacrifice. No portion of our country was so persistently frequented by ocean rovers; no point so exposed to foreign enemies in times of war. The main house, now standing, was built by David Gardiner, 1774;



VASE GIVEN BY MAJOR ANDRE TO
COLONEL ABRAHAM
GARDINER



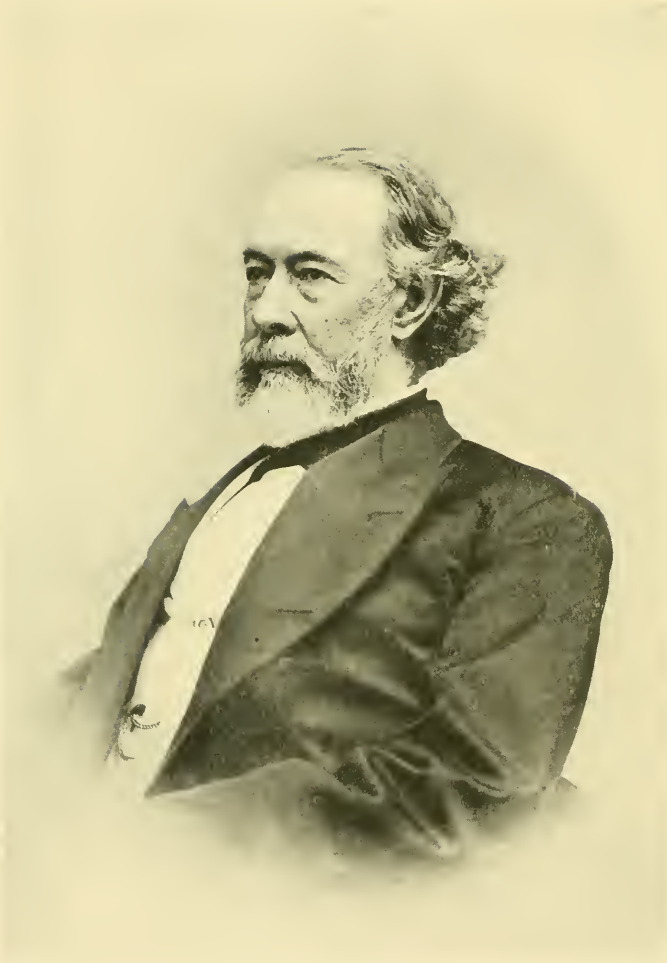
SARAH (GRISWOLD) GARDINER, WIFE OF THE 7TH LORD OF THE MANOR
(The original is in the manor house, Gardiner's Island)



JOHN LION GARDINER, 7TH LORD OF THE MANOR
(The original is in the manor house, Gardiner's Island)



VIEW OF THE POINT ON GARDINER'S ISLAND



SAMUEL BUELL GARDINER, 10TH LORD OF THE MANOR, SON OF THE 7TH
AND BROTHER OF THE 9TH LORD OF THE MANOR
(The original is in the manor house, Gardiner's Island)

the sixth proprietor, one hundred and thirty-five years after the original settlement. The estate had then become a garden of beauty, from eighty to one hundred attendants kept it trimmed, and blooming; great fields of oats and wheat, and other grains made graceful obeisance to the scythe; some two thousand loads of hay were stored in barns every Autumn; three hundred or more cattle grazed in its sunny pastures, and ten times as many sheep, with an annual yield of thousands of pounds of wool. The dairy produced butter in large quantities, and cheese averaged as many as a hundred and twenty pounds per day, for the season. The Lord of the Island rarely stabled less than sixty horses, the finest in the country. He raised annually a hundred hogs, wild turkeys hovered about in great numbers, coming to yards daily, to be fed with the tame fowls. A large herd of deer roamed at will among the fine old trees, which would have done credit to any English park; and thus, the island was kept during my father's time, but after his death, the farm life was given up and my nephew, Lion Gardiner, now uses the island as a game preserve, it being stocked with English pheasants, deer and wild birds of every variety.

Thus, Lion Gardiner's legacy has descended, an island quite unspoiled by time, a lovely solitude, which no Caucasian ever called his own unless he was called by the name of Gardiner.

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